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Some facts about the blind.

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SOME FACTS CONCERNING THE BLIND

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Some facts concerning the blind population have been gleaned from the 1910 census of the United States, and have been thought sufficiently interesting to present in greatly condensed shape. Much has, of course, been omitted.

The total blind population of the United States is 57,272. Of these, 32,443 are males, and 24,829 are females. The male majority is doubtless largely due to the extra liability of males to accidents, owing to their occupations, etc. There are 62 blind persons in every hundred thousand of the population of the United States. There are 2,390,000 blind persons in the world. Egypt has more blind persons proportionately than any country in the world, having 1,325 to every hundred thousand of population.

The twelve countries having the least blindness are as follows: Belgium (before the war) had 43 blind persons to every hundred thousand of the population; Canada, 44; Netherlands, 46; Saxony, 47; New Zealand, 47; Western Australia, 50; Hong Kong, 51; Prussia, 52; Denmark, 52; Germany, 60; New South Wales, 60, and the United States, 62.

In the United States, the twelve states having the least blindness are as follows: North Dakota, 28 blind persons to every hundred thousand of the population; Wyoming 32; Washington, 38; Nebraska, 38; Minnesota, 42; Oregon, 44; New Jersey, 44; Montana, 44; South Dakota, 45; Colorado, 47; Idaho, 48, and Connecticut, 49.

The six states having the most blindness are as follows: New Mexico, 169 blind persons to every hundred thousand of the population; Nevada, 118; Arizona, 95; Kentucky, 94; Tennessee, 89, and Virginia, 80.

The excessive blindness in these states is probably due to the prevalence of smallpox in New Mexico,

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Nevada and Arizona, and the ravages of trachoma in Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia. Mining accidents in the first three states also have much to do with the number of blind persons.

About half of the blind population are over 60 years of age. This is probably due to the fact that cataract, glaucoma, etc., are largely diseases of old age. It is quite likely that these figures are not entirely correct, as it has been found difficult to collect reliable data concerning the blindness of babies, as ophthalmia neonatorum is usually considered a disgraceful disease, and parents frequently endeavor to conceal its existence.

The six foreign countries producing the most blind United States residents are as follows: Ireland, 169 blind persons to every hundred thousand of the United States population; Canada, 168; Netherlands (including Belgium and Luxemberg), 158; Mexico, 148; England and Wales, 116, and Germany, 106.

These figures are probably due to the large number of immigrants from these countries, the large number of old persons, the ignorance of the Irish and the Mexicans, the insanitary life, medical ignorance, carelessness and superstitions of the two latter countries, and the hazardous mining occupations of the Mexicans.

The six foreign countries producing the least number of blind United States residents are as follows: Hungary, 14 blind persons to every hundred thousand of the United States population; Italy, 19; Russia, 22; Austria, 26; Finland, 27, and Belgium, 46.

Of the male blind population, about 32 per cent. are single and about 67 per cent. are married, widowed or divorced. Of the female blind population, about 29 per cent. are single, and about 70 per cent. are married, widowed or divorced.

Of the male blind in the United States, 25 per cent. are gainfully employed, while only 5 per cent. of the females are gainfully employed. The gainfully employed are mostly native-born white persons, the foreign-born doing less to gain a living, and the negroes still less.

The six occupations chiefly chosen by male blind persons are as follows: farmers, 1,768 persons; broom makers, 665; musicians, 646; hucksters and pedlers, 401; piano tuners, 349, and chair caners, 242.

The six occupations least chosen by male blind persons are as follows: fancy workers, 6 persons; nurses, 7; saloons, 12; printing, etc., 13; hammock and net makers, 18, and organ grinders, 17.

The six occupations chiefly chosen by female blind persons are as follows: musicians, 167 persons; farmers, 127; servants, 120; laundresses, 109; knitters, 102, and fancy workers, 86.

The six occupations least chosen by female blind persons are as follows: insurance and real estate, 1 person; retail merchants, 1; newspaper carriers, 1; organ grinders, 1; news dealers, 2, and professional entertainers, 3.

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Reprinted from The Journal of the American Medical Association Sept. 4, 1915, Vol. LXV, pp. 868 and 869

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American Medical Association, 535 N. Dearborn St., Chicago